

partisan ambitions. Again, you would think, after the election of 2020—when you have an evenly divided Senate wherein the Vice President is the one who breaks ties and actually determines, because of that, who is in the majority and who is in the minority—that it would council up some bipartisan consensus-making when the Senate is split, essentially, evenly.

Instead, we have seen one of the most aggressive, radical agendas that we have seen since I have been in the Senate, and not surprisingly, our Democratic colleagues have had trouble convincing even Members of their own caucus to go along with it.

The Build Back Better program—or what I would call “Build Back Bankrupt”—is a bill that gives millionaires and billionaires massive tax breaks. Strangely, from the party that claims to be representing the working class and the middle class of the country, they want to prioritize the tax breaks for millionaires and billionaires while forcing middle-class families, who can’t afford to buy expensive electric cars, to subsidize these fancy cars driven by others who can afford them.

Our colleagues say the spending spree will cost taxpayers about \$2 trillion, which, of course, is hardly a bargain to begin with. I remember when a billion dollars used to be a lot of money around here, and now trillions of dollars are casually tossed around like it is an insignificant—or not as serious—a matter as it is.

Yet we know the spending spree—as I said, the “Build Back Bankrupt” or “Build Back Broke,” whatever you want to call it, or “Build Back Bad,” and there are other names you can give it—could cost as much as \$5 trillion, as I said, which is more than 2½ times what has been advertised.

We started at \$6 trillion from the chairman of the Budget Committee, Senator SANDERS. Then it was paired down, supposedly, to \$3.5 trillion, and then to \$1.75 trillion. The only way that was done was to propose a piece of legislation that was chock-full of gimmicks and cliffs and phony, false starts in programs that will, in all likelihood, be continued should our Democratic colleagues stay in the majority or achieve a true majority.

This multitrillion-dollar bill will drive up energy costs. We have already seen inflation eating away at the income of working families. When you go fill up your gas tank at the gas station or when you sit down to Thanksgiving dinner, everything is more expensive now because of inflation, making it even tougher for Texas families, among others, to make ends meet.

Of course, then, there is the President’s falsely representing the cost of this piece of legislation—actually having the temerity to say that this costs zero. I don’t know what he takes the American people for, but they are not stupid. They understand that, when somebody stands up there and says we are going to do something that has

been scored to the trillions of dollars and that it is going to cost zero, it really is an insult to their intelligence.

For the past several months, our colleagues have devoted almost all of their energy to this “Build Back Bankrupt” plan and, of course, in the process, have failed to meet any of the most basic responsibilities of governing. Now that it is finals season and we are running out of time before the Christmas holidays, they are trying to salvage their poor performance of accomplishment this year.

Our colleagues are quick to point the finger and blame Republicans for the Senate’s failures, but Republicans aren’t the ones setting the schedule, and, frankly, the message being sent from the Democratic side of the aisle is: We don’t want to work with Republicans; we want to do this all by ourselves.

If they get the votes, they can, but they are having some difficulties now—particularly on the “Build Back Broke” plan—of even getting Democrats to vote for it. I, actually, think our colleagues from West Virginia and Arizona are doing some of their Democratic colleagues a favor because, I dare say, there are other Members of the Democratic caucus who are going to be on the ballot in 2022, who would prefer not to vote on some of these very controversial provisions.

Our colleagues, though, do control the Senate, the House, and the White House, and every aspect of the legislative process is under their control. So they bear responsibility for the delay in the Defense authorization bill; they bear responsibility for not passing regular appropriations; and they bear responsibility for the concerns that have been expressed by reaching the debt limit, as Secretary Yellen has said, and then, finally, by trying to pass through the House this reckless tax-and-spending spree bill—Build Back Better, “Build Back Broke,” “Build Back Bankrupt”—by focusing so much on these pieces of legislation that will, in my estimation, never pass or certainly not in their current forms.

In ignoring their other basic responsibilities of governing, they are the ones who, ultimately, will get this report card for their performance during the first year of their majority.

So, in being presented with this reality of an evenly split Congress, our colleagues can make a choice as to whether to try to work together and build consensus and do things that can actually pass or to continue down this pathway of purely partisan attempts to legislate. The choice is theirs.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to confirm several highly qualified nominees who are waiting to get to work in critical roles across the government.

Therefore, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate consider the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 404, Rupa Ranga Puttagunta, of the District of Columbia, to be Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years; that the nomination be confirmed; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order on the nomination; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate’s action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, in reserving the right to object, throughout his Presidency, Joe Biden and his administration have shown a complete and total inability to place qualified and competent people in positions of power across the Federal Government. We have had crisis after crisis due to the failed leadership of President Biden and his appointees. I have absolutely no faith that Joe Biden’s radical, far-left nominees will uphold the rule of law.

I cannot and will not consent to allowing these nominees to move forward in an expedited manner. We should take a vote so every Senator can get on the record with their support or opposition to each of these nominees.

Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 406, Kenia Seoane Lopez, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 410, Sean C. Staples, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 556, Ebony M. Scott, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 557, Donald Walker Tunnage, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for a term of fifteen years.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 511, Susan Grundmann, of Virginia, to be a Member of the Federal Labor Relations Authority for a term of five years expiring July 1, 2025.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, it is my understanding that the next two nominees that I will bring forward have been cleared, and I would certainly urge my colleagues to support their confirmation.

The first is Michael Kubayanda, nominated to serve a second term on the Postal Regulatory Commission.

Mr. Kubayanda joined the Commission in January of 2019 after he was unanimously confirmed by the Senate during the last administration. Earlier this month, his nomination was reported from committee by a bipartisan vote.

I will say that he brings insight and expertise from decades of experience in both government and the private sector. During his tenure as Chairman of the Commission, Mr. Kubayanda has demonstrated his commitment to working in a bipartisan manner to make the Postal Service more effective and accountable.

I would urge my colleagues to join me in supporting his nomination.

Next, Mr. President, I would ask my colleagues to join me in confirming

Erik Hooks to be Deputy Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA.

The Deputy Administrator helps lead FEMA's work preparing for and responding to disasters, ranging from hurricanes to historic flooding and wildfires, to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Hooks has more than 30 years of public safety experience, including serving as secretary of public safety and homeland security advisor for the State of North Carolina, where his responsibilities included overseeing the State's emergency management agency.

I would urge my colleagues to join me in swiftly confirming Mr. Hooks to this important role as well.

So, Mr. President, I would ask unanimous consent that the Senate consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar No. 558 and Calendar No. 555; that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc without intervening action or debate; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nominations of Michael Kubayanda, of Ohio, to be a Commissioner of the Postal Regulatory Commission for a term expiring November 22, 2026 (Reappointment); and Erik Adrian Hooks, of North Carolina, to be Deputy Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

NOMINATION OF CHRIS MAGNUS

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, the Senate will soon vote on the nomination of Chief Chris Magnus to lead the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Office, and I was very pleased that the Senate Finance Committee could advance this important nomination.

I want to give the Senate a brief assessment of why I think Chief Magnus is going to handle his job very well.

He brings a unique combination of smarts, common sense, and fairness, and that is really what this job is all about. For example, having talked to the chief at some length, he understands that strongly enforcing our immigration laws and treating immigrants and asylum seekers humanely are not mutually exclusive. You can do both. They are not incompatible. It is a perspective, in my view, on immigration that is going to help our communities, help public safety, and help our economy all at the same time.

Now, there is no doubt in my mind that Chief Magnus has the right qualifications for this position. He is highly experienced. He started out in Lansing, MI, and has headed up law enforcement agencies across the country—East, West, North, and South.

Currently, he serves as the chief of police in Tucson, AZ. That means we will have an individual leading Customs and Border Protection who starts on day 1—day 1—with firsthand knowledge about the challenges law enforcement on the southern border.

Even beyond that specific element of Customs and Border Protection's work, his range of experience in law enforcement all over the country makes him an ideal pick to lead an Agency with tens of thousands of employees, staffing more than 300 points of entry to our country.

So I think that is the heart of why he is going to be such a positive force with respect to border security, but I also want to note that on the Finance Committee, we are acutely aware that Customs and Border Protection is not just in the business of immigration; it is also on the frontlines of enforcing American trade laws. And too often in the past, that part of the mission has just gotten short shrift.

Today, Customs and Border Protection is the heart of the effort to fight against immoral and unfair trade practices, including the use of forced labor in China and elsewhere. Customs and Border Protection not only investigates forced labor and demands remediation where appropriate, it also enforces the ban on forced labor products entering our country.

Staying a step ahead of trade cheats, whether they are involved in forced labor or not, is key to protecting American jobs, our businesses, and innovation. Workers and businesses depend on healthy, functioning supply chains. We have certainly seen, since the beginning of the pandemic, that when the supply chains break down, you have enormous headaches throughout the economy, from the biggest businesses right down to individual families who are shopping this holiday season for typical holiday goods.

During his nomination hearing, Chief Magnus assured the Finance Committee that Customs and Border Protection's trade mission is going to get the focus and the resources it needs if he is confirmed. He has committed to ensuring that there is adequate staffing at our ports, and he is interested in improving the efficiency of our customs operations in a way that maintains key protections for consumer safety.

He is a first-rate nominee. It is clear he has got the right priorities when it comes to Customs and Border Protection challenges that many of our Senators care about most—securing the border and helping to get supply chains back to normal.

I believe that he is going to work with all of the Members of this body on